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then become elements of discord and strife, and not bonds of union and development. This is the sin which darkly interlinks itself with every epoch of human advancement and amelioration. Many men, if not most, are by nature prone to moral and religious retrogradation rather than progression, and when this is the case, their salvation depends more upon the spiritual nature of the social atmosphere in which they live than upon the abstract teachings and preachings of men salaried for the purpose. By way of recommending the valuable and truly able and enlightened work of Professor Powell, we give our readers the following extract :

" Among the generality of mere worldly men there is less of *irreligion* than of *low and corrupt religion*; few *reject Christianity*, compared with the many who *debase it into mere formalism and superstition*. A religion of a certain kind is almost universally upheld; but it is a religion of mere prepossession, party custom, or conventionalism; or if it advances to anything like more rational principles, it is a recognition of utility rather than of truth, or else a mere adherence to what is established, feeling a dread, above all things, of unsettling men's minds by any attempts at inculcating more enlightened or more spiritual views, and coupled with a grave and philosophical censure of *extreme* opinions, and high approbation of a steady adherence to the safe middle path—between truth and falsehood.

" It has sometimes been made an objection to Christianity, that it, in fact, encourages wickedness by holding out to the sinner the easy terms of mere repentance and faith; yet, practically, it is the most difficult thing to induce men to accept those terms. Human nature will cling to *external* means; an uneasy conscience will seek relief, not in a practical and spiritual change, but in formal observances, ceremonial services, and morose austerity. *Moral corruption* is palpably manifest in an immoral life; but *religious* corruption escapes detection under an exterior of sanctimonious rigor, displays itself more especially in affecting violent offence at the irreligion of others, and thus gains credit for exalted piety and goodness.

" The tendencies to Judaism, arising from mistaken views of Scripture, and a want of due recognition of Christianity in its primitive simplicity and purity, as disclosed in the apostolic writings, are powerfully seconded and upheld by the *tendencies of human nature*; and though there is no foundation for sabbatism in morality or Christianity, there is a deep-seated foundation for it in the formalism and superstition so congenial to the human heart.

" Of all corrupt notions, that of relegating religious duties to certain fixed periods or days, is one of the most grateful to human nature, but most radically hostile to Christian principles, though often defended on the plea, that what is left to be done at any time will never be done; whereas, the true argument is, that it is to be done at *all* times.

" Those who are not religious *habitually*, will seek to be so *occasionally*; those who do not keep up *continual* holiness will seek *periodical* sanctity. Those who do not make their *lives* holy, can punctiliously keep *days* holy. It is easier to sanctify times and places than our hearts; human nature clings to religious formalism, and especially to sabbatism, as an easy mode of compounding for a worldly, if not irreligious life."

#### LECTURES ON CHURCH-BUILDING.\*

SOMETIME in the year 1853, the parish church of Doncaster, in England, which was in many respects a fine example of the Gothic architecture of the fifteenth century, was destroyed by fire. The public feeling of the neighborhood, and the zealous admiration of some public men and amateurs of mediæval architecture for the ruined monument, would not allow the memory of so fine a work of art to be lost. It was, therefore, determined to rebuild the church, as nearly as possible upon its former plan, remedying some defects and inconsistencies, and carrying out in its full spirit the "Decorated" style. Among the gentlemen selected to direct the work was Mr. Denison, now, we believe, the Speaker of the House of Commons. Mr. Scott, the best designer in England in the Gothic style, was employed as the architect, and from his plans the new building has been erected. It is unusually successful, presenting many of the finest features of its style, and giving fair testimony to the fact, so long doubted, that it is feasible, in our times, to revive the architecture of a past day in its true spirit and perfection. At the same time, it has one or two of the faults peculiar to the English Gothic styles, of which the most prominent and painful is the littleness of the doors—"mere pigeon-holes," as they have been fitly termed. It is not our purpose, however, to criticise the building, but to call attention to Mr. Denison's lectures about it. They were originally addressed to the people of Doncaster, and intended to show in what manner and upon what principles the work intrusted to him and his associates had been carried out. He has evidently studied and thought deeply upon the subject of architecture, and his opinions are given with a decision, clearness and vigor which indicate that he is fully and deliberately convinced of their correctness. Like most other writers upon Art, he has his hobbies; but they are harmless ones, and will bear riding. The book before us is admirably adapted for popular reading, by its freedom from technicalities and its plain common-sense views of things—and professional men will find much in it to stir up their ideas, and perhaps to rub against their prejudices. It is one of a class of writings which, we are glad to see, is rapidly enlarging, emanating from men of strong minds and educated taste, all tending to show the practicability of our using the mediæval styles of architecture for every-day purposes, and the desirability of so doing, not only because of its beauty, but because it is best adapted to our wants, and offers the best mode of expressing our ideas. Mr. Denison does not hesitate to attack writers who have preceded him whenever occasion arises, and particularly Mr. Ruskin, with whom he differs in many points and agrees in others, but to whom, on the whole, he awards high praise, giving him the credit of having "done more than any other writer to call the attention of mankind to what may be called the moral

\* Lectures on Church-building, with some practical remarks on Bells and Clocks. By E. B. DENISON, M.A. London, 1856.

"characteristics of Gothic architecture as distinguished from Classical or Renaissance." One great proof of Mr. Ruskin's power as an author and of the influence which he has exerted is to be found in the fact, that no one attempts to write anything upon the subjects of which he has treated without lugging him in "for better or for worse." Accordingly, Mr. Denison opens his first lecture thus : "The author of the Stones of Venice has said . . . that it is impossible we can have any real architects now, because no man can be an architect unless he is also either a sculptor or painter." He then proceeds to ridicule the idea, but, to our thinking, without at all weakening Mr. Ruskin's position, which is simply this : that sculpture or painting is indispensable to the highest development of any style of architecture that can be called great, as he plainly proves by reference to the best known and most generally acknowledged standards of all pure styles, from which if the sculpture or painting be removed the whole life vanishes. "Of course," says our lecturer, "I take for granted that he uses the word sculptor in its natural sense, and not in the non-natural sense of a designer of architectural ornament." This, after the great care taken by Mr. Ruskin to define his meaning, is unfair, and would seem to indicate that Mr. Denison, like most other people, has read his writings carelessly. We can hardly consider him competent to advise his hearers how they should read Ruskin, or to warn them against his faults, or to denounce his logic.

Not to enter into the details of the lectures, and the many questions noticed and discussed therein, there are some passages well worth quoting as of interest to our general readers. Speaking of the cause of the mistakes so frequently made in getting the effect shown in preliminary drawings carried out in a building, he attributes it to the want of proper drawings, showing *every part* of the design in perspective.

"Working drawings are made as if the architect expected to be directed by inspiration to hit upon the right proportions, without even taking the trouble to draw the whole of a thing at once, so as to get some faint idea of what it will look like in reality. I say a faint idea, because I utterly deride the notion that any human being can do more than guess how anything will really look from that flat and shadowless image of an impossible reality, called, in architectural slang, an elevation; and of course still less from a section or ground plan; though these things are all necessary for the merely mechanical operations of the builder. But building is one thing and designing for architectural effect is another."

We can see in our own city many illustrations of these remarks ; but at the same time, why cannot an architect of experience and judgment *think* in perspective? Can he not, and does he not, in designing his ground plan and elevations, keep constantly in view the perspective effect? We fear our professional friends will hardly think themselves as devoid of imagination as Mr. Denison supposes them to be.

"If the problem of modern architecture is how to get five per cent. upon a certain—or, rather, uncertain—sum of money, which is to be paid to a builder, with the least possible trouble, no doubt the solution will be a very different one from that of the problem which the old builders thought they had to solve. Just imagine the architect of Lincoln Cathedral or St. Mary's Abbey, sending to some Grand or Provincial Master of Freemasons to ask whether he ought to be paid for advising that the roof should have the old lead taken off and new put on, by charging five per cent. on the value of the new, or only on the amount of the plumber's contract, as usual, and receiving for answer that, when the old materials are re-used the architect ought to charge a commission on what their value was, or would be, when new; and that 'many architects (one is glad to see at any rate not all) charge more than the ordinary commission, *and with justice*, on alterations, and repairs.' Possibly you may think all this has nothing more to do with architecture than the mode of taxing the attorney's costs has to do with the verdict of the jury, or the decision of the judge in a law-suit. But it has a great deal to do with it. If an artist—and a real architect is an artist of the highest rank—is to be paid like a broker, it lays him under a great temptation to act like a broker, and to treat architecture as if it were the trade of manufacturing plans, and as if he is the greatest man who can sell the greatest number in the shortest time."

There is much more in this vein, but it will not tell on our side of the Atlantic, for the very men who "manufacture plans" are just the ones that charge for their services a given price, and not a per-cent-age on the cost of the building. They are the very ones who subject the profession to the "odium which is reflected upon the whole fraternity from the too notorious practices of the lowest class, in receiving contractors' 'bonuses,' clandestine per-centages on recommendations, and other complicated forms of bribery and corruption."

Our author concludes some very sensible and well-directed arguments against Mr. Petit (an erratic writer, who thinks the revival of Gothic architecture impracticable) thus :

"While he condemns the Art and praises the artists, I uphold the Art and find fault with the artists; not because I am insensible to the great advances they have made during the time that he has been falling into despair, or getting up a new taste; but because I think they ought to have made more, and because I see many mistakes made regularly and systematically, even by the best architects, which the examples constantly before their eyes might have taught them to avoid; and if I can see such mistakes, with the little attention that I have paid to this subject. . . . I cannot help concluding that those who have either made architecture their business, or who profess to devote themselves to the Arts, might, if they pleased, find out many more faults and the means of correcting them. And that, in my opinion, is not to be done, either in architecture or anything else, by the method which now prevails of raging against 'systems' which can't reform themselves, and praising individuals who won't, but by censuring the particular bad thing, and exposing the particular man who does it, with respect of persons, openly, distinctly, and unretractingly, first only taking care to be right."

The final lecture is devoted to Bells and Clocks, and will

be found full of practical information and useful suggestions. Mr. Denison is an authority on the subject, we believe, having had a good deal of experience in it, and studied it both scientifically and mechanically. If, however, we are right in our impression that he had charge of the casting and swinging of "Big Ben," the immense bell made for the Victoria tower of the new Houses of Parliament, he has for once been unfortunate, "Ben" having cracked shortly after being hoisted to its place—from what cause we are not aware.

#### THE GOLDEN SUNSET.

The following verses were written as words to a bit of color-music; one of an interesting series of water-color sketches, by Mr. Charles Parsons, of this city, which we are glad to meet again in the present exhibition of the Academy. It was a happy thought of the artist, in crossing the ferry to his home, on the evening of December, a year ago, to note upon his tablet the sunsets which he saw, and afterwards to re-produce them. These recollections, fixing this the most evanescent of natural glories, will reveal something of the infinite variety of Nature to minds who, perhaps, have thought that a sunset was a sunset. It is one of the high ends of the artist to teach men to see what is before their eyes; and perhaps, after seeing here what of beauty the evenings of a single month have to show them, more than one resident across the river may think of the daily passage as less an annoyance than a privilege, and count the ferrage cheap whose ticket admits him to such a perpetual gallery as the sketches illustrate.

The golden sea its mirror spreads  
Beneath the golden skies,  
And but a narrow strip between  
Of land and shadow lies.

The cloud-like rocks, the rock-like clouds,  
Dissolved in glory float,  
And, midway of the radiant flood,  
Hangs silently the boat.

The sea is but another sky,  
The sky a sea as well,  
And which is earth, and which the heavens  
The eye can scarcely tell.

So when for us life's evening hour  
Soft-fading shall descend,  
May glory, born of earth and heaven,  
The earth and heavens blend;

Flooded with peace the spirit float,  
With silent rapture glow,  
Till where earth ends and heaven begins  
The soul shall scarcely know.

SAMUEL LONGFELLOW.

By Grace I mean that artless balance of action and repose, springing from character, founded on propriety, which neither falls short of the demands nor overleaps the modesty of nature. Applied to execution, it means that dexterous power which hides the means by which its effect was obtained, the difficulties it has conquered.—*Fuseli.*

#### NATIONAL HERALDIC ART.

*To the Editor of the Crayon:*

AWAITING the action of the Commission on National Art, which it is to be supposed Congress will organize immediately, allow me to suggest through your columns a design for a noble work, to be laid before the Commission for its consideration. I am strongly in favor of Art being restricted to subjects of the day. I desire, as one citizen of this land, born by accident at this time, to transmit to posterity some striking evidence through Art, that the leading ideas of the country and of the age are recognized before posterity has a chance to take us to task for insensibility. I wish to follow the example of Great Britain, and show by heraldic emblazonments, a disposition to symbolize the original elements of our empire. You are doubtless aware that, in ancient times, the bards of Ireland and Wales were the most dreaded enemies England had to contend with; the bards stimulated the Irish and Welsh branches of the Celtic family to resist and to rebel, exciting their sensitive countrymen to arms by spirited appeals to abstract sentiments, and by drawing brilliant pictures of post-mortem honors; consequently, when a sufficient number of these bards had been caught, then hung, drawn and quartered, to intimidate the rest, the English annexed Ireland and Wales to their own land, and gratefully quartered the harp on the national shield of Great Britain, in token of respect for music and poetry, as well as to display a trophy of success and victory. I mention this one example of English custom to illustrate the principle upon which I base my suggestion of a noble artistic work. Without further preamble, therefore, I proceed at once to make you acquainted with my design.

I propose to the Commission to have painted, on some conspicuous place upon the Capitol-building at Washington, a national heraldic design, in other words, a coat of arms, typical of the cherished ideas of this particular age, which design I hope to have supplant, in popular estimation, the old and superannuated one of a striped shield and its motto of unity. I have not yet studied out all the ideas necessary to complete the design, but I have got a clear conception of two or three very important ones.

You are aware that coats-of-arms have figures on either side of a shield, termed supporters; they are first among the concomitants of heraldic insignia. I may say at once, that in my design, the supporters are intended to symbolize the Press—the great bulwark of freedom, and an institution of this age which I consider to be synonymous with that of the bards of old times. Everybody knows that the Press is powerful through eloquence, and that it is ever steadily gaining in influence. Editors have been nominated ministers extraordinary to foreign countries, as artists formerly were, and have actually "left their country for their country's good." The Press makes presidents,\* senators (indirectly), more directly representatives, and latterly judges, and being such a comprehensive, active, and effective power, it may be said to be literally the supporter of the government. I have adopted two human figures, standing erect, to typify the Press. It may strike your readers curiously that I should adopt two supporters under one title of the Press; it may be asserted that I do not husband the material of my design by using two figures for an artistic idea when one would

\* The word President seems to show an affinity for the word Press. Some future "Trench on words" may prove the latter to be a derivative from the former when distance shall have merged the origin of the two institutions of the Press and President into a vague and misty subject for archaeological speculation.